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Russia's effort

Paris

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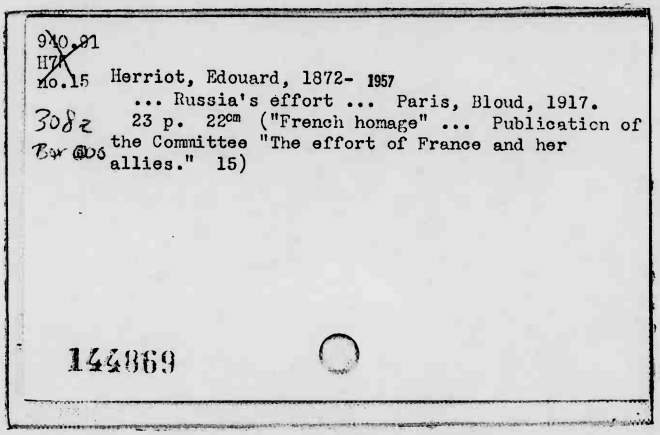
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"FRENCH HOMAGE"

RUSSIA'S EFFORT

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by

Edouard HERRIOT

Ex Minister of France

Publication of the Committee
"THE EFFORT OF FRANCE
AND OF HER ALLIES"

BLOUD & GAY, Éditeurs
PARIS-BARCELONE

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" THE EFFORT OF FRANCE
:: AND HER ALLIES " ::

BLOUD & GAY
ÉDITEURS
PARIS — *BARCELONE*
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1917

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RUSSIA'S EFFORT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

There are many men—and among them I will mention first of all my friend Paul Doumer, who has been kind enough to take the chair to-day—better qualified than myself to tell you about Russia's effort. I was quite conscious of this, but as it was desired that the mayor of a French city should extend a greeting, in this illustrious place, to the respected and loved colleagues whom Russia has sent to us, I ventured to accept the honor. It seemed to me that an address intended above all things to be a true expression of the situation, might not be without its usefulness, and that it might have some effect in this arduous time, in which the fate of justice, progress and right depends on the firmness with which our two nations unite in a strong determination to do their duty. My ardent affection for our ally must be my excuse if I fall short of your expectations and the greatness of the subject.

From every point of view, the subject is immense, and you will readily admit that I can do no more than touch upon it. Germany deliberately made war not only on ourselves but the Russian Empire, that is to say, two Russias in one—European and Asiatic Russia, between which the boundaries are purely artificial. European Russia covers over three million square miles and is about ten times the size of France. At the beginning of 1913, she had 150.000.000 inhabitants. The total population of the empire was estimated three years ago at

176.000.000. Everything, in fact, in connection with Russia is immense, and, if we are to get a true appreciation of Russian questions, we must begin by making a mental effort to re-adjust the units which we take as the basis of our ordinary reasoning. It is as far from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea as it is from the north of Norway to Bordeaux. It is further from Warsaw to Moscow than it is from Paris to Rome, and the journey from Petrograd to Odessa is as long as from Belgrade to Paris. As regards the elevations and depressions in its surface, Russia is fairly uniform, while there is more variety in the aspect of its soil. In the west and north-west we have the greyish « podzol », clothed with great forests and dotted with the small lakes and marshes so often mentioned in the official war reports. At other points we find extremely fertile black soil. Russia is still more varied as regards her vegetation and her produce. To us inhabitants of an old, historic country, she presents herself in the guise of a young and multiform being, ardently alive, already very powerful and destined to become more powerful still. This being was born in the forest and lived under its protection. Later on it began to live in the glades, using its curious form of organization know as the « mir » to defend itself against the attacks of nature and the violence of invaders. One day it plucked up courage and galloped towards the steppes. At this stage, in the mists of tradition, we begin to see the dim figures of the czars, who have been justly called the « assemblers » of the Russian domain. They gradually drove out the invaders, and recaptured all the fragments which have since been sewn together and form the imperial cloak of Holy Russia. Served by such monarchs as Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great and Catherine II, the magnificent and healthy giant has continued to grow, to conquer and to occupy. Cruel and insolent Germany now has to deal with all these Russian lands that have been so patiently and courageously brought together.

From the simplest up to the most highly-educated, the whole nation knows that all its past and future are at stake in the present drama.

Viewed from afar, Russia seems to be almost motionless. We get the same impression when we look from far inland at an ocean. As a matter of tact, this immense country accomplishes incessant and tremendous labor. From time to time she attracts the world's attention by some great decision : for instance," the manifesto issued Oct. 17, 1905, by the Emperor, who has earned the respect of Frenchmen of all shades of opinion. This manifesto gave the Russian people civic liberty on the basis of individual rights and freedom of conscience, speech, meeting and association. Russia thus became a constitutional monarchy. According to the laws, the legislative power is exercised by the Emperor, in conjunction with the Imperial Council, which forms the First Chamber, and the Imperial Duma, or Second Chamber. The two assemblies are summoned every year by imperial decree. No new law can take effect without their assent and the imperial sanction. The budget must be debated and settled in the same way. I lay some little stress on these facts, because they help us appreciate the value of the visit we receive to-day, because they are indispensable to help us understand the history of the present war, and finally, and more especially, because they are an unanswerable reply to the German theory that our Russian allies stand greatly in need of German influence for their emancipation. My dear Russian friends, the idea is to « kultur » you, and ourselves too. But Russia has no need of this service. Within her own boundaries she has everything needful for her future. Though I have no idea of expressing any opinion on matters of Russia's internal policy, because we Frenchmen believe in the autonomy of nations, I can say that Russia has every interest in depending exclusively upon herself. The victory for which she and we

are striving should not only bring her territorial independence but internal liberty, over which Germany, despite her odious attempts, clearly has no right.

From this point of view, it can also be asserted that the war has done Russia an immense service. She was already conscious of her greatness, and, from the very beginning of the present conflict, she gained the consciousness of her unity. As a proof of this I would like to quote what I consider a remarkable passage from a book recenly published by Count Alexis Tolstoi, entitled : « Lieut. Demianoff's War Stories. » With this collection of sincere and charming short stories is a preface which I advise you to read. It is entitled « The Nation ». No one among us, the writer says, knew what his real feelings towards Russia were ; but when July 30, 1914, came, a miracle happened. From Vladivostock to the western frontiers, from the Black Sea to the White Sea, there was the same enthusiasm over the declaration. The taciturn and somnolent nation that caused us so much anxiety and seemed to care nothing for our science, rose up suddenly, with bravery, decision and gravity, to take part in a war without precedent in human annals. This country, young but wise, self-centered, profoundly mystic, clumsy and uncultivated, but with a pure and tender heart, realized, in a flash, it own power, and spontaneously applied all its great and holy energy to the sublime effort we call war.

« These men went off, not in search of glory or the satisfaction of hatred, but to take part in the national work, because the time had come for it. Russia may be said to have become one estate. The wheat being ripe, harvesters were needed, whereupon every man on the estate came with his sickle and set to work. »

The facts I am about to summarize are merely so many comments on the remarkable utterance I have just quoted. City and country alike united. « While Belgium was expiring on her bed of torture » writes Count Alexis Tolstoi, « we suddenly grasped the real bearing of the sentiment that attaches a man to his native land, his race and his traditions ». Ladies and gentlemen, I certainly do not propose to advocate war, which I hate for the grief, the brutal destruction, and the endless anguish inflicted on mothers ; but let us at least recognize that, while peace sets our reason to work and thereby tends to veil the real mind of the nation under the generally uniform scheme of institutions, war reveals that mind through the torn cloak of convention and shows it for what it is worth. With all the strength of his instinct, the humble peasant seeks to lift himself up towards that higher aim foreshadowed by his conscience. The superior finds himself hand in hand with the brother whom he thought inferior and whom he did not know. Thus is the soul of a nation wrought and re-wrought in the forge ; thus is given the impulse that will be kept up through ages to come, and will live through the greatness of what is being done to-day.

When the call to arms was trumpeted forth, the Russian soul was brought together just as happened to Russian territories in the distant past. This soul loves and concentrates itself in the army. I hardly think it necessary to praise the Russian army, but how moving is the spectacle it presents ! Here is a winter scene on the Mitau road. Snow is falling. The Germans are quite near, in the dug-outs to which their Kultur has brought them. Near the isba where the staff officers are at work among the trees, a company is drawn up. It consists of young men, strong but peaceable-looking. On a table covered with a white cloth are the Cross and the Gospel, which, even to unbelievers, are symbols of goodness and the spirit of self-sacrifice. There are two small ikons. The recruits are about to take the oath. The colonel addresses them in that vigorous but fatherly style that marks the Russian officer. Shells whistle overhead, and, all the time,

the snow falls. The young soldiers' cheeks are powdered with the white flakes, and I imagine that their hearts are as fresh as their faces. Then the priest speaks, and, on the fringe of the tutelary forest, the men, with raised hands, slowly take the oath. MM. Goutchkoff and Kroupensky are there, the bearers of a greeting from the whole of Russia. This is no German melodrama with all its frightful bad taste, still worse than shells; this is no grotesque appeal to the « old God » of butchery. Here are men in sincere meditation. These men have come to offer their lives to the country and for a future they may never see ; and, when the time comes, these gallant and single-hearted soldiers will fling themselves on the lying German beast. A German professor, who has placed all his knowledge at the service of crime, describes these men as savages. As a Frenchman, I say they are fine, upright, tender and strong men, and I love them with all my heart.

There are many affinities between them and ourselves. The Marseillaise flickers like a flame over our troops ; above yours, my Russian friends, the National Anthem rises like a cloud of incense. But, in both cases, the heart is there, and, whatever the crowned murderer at Berlin may say, it is heart that makes great armies as well as great countries. How well they recognize one another when they meet, our soldiers and yours ! Let me mention one instance. I take it from « A Soldier's Journal » by my young friend Gaston Riou, who has been a prisoner of war in Germany. The scene took place in a fortress, where French soldiers were already confined, and the Germans were sending some Russians to join them, fully expecting that they would quarrel, and preparing to sow discord between them. This is what happened :

« Night was coming on, and we saw the grey uniforms glide by in the twilight. There was not a sound. All the Russias passed before us as we looked. It was like a snow

scene in a dream. Then they crossed the bridge and marched into the fort. Inside, greatly scandalizing our masters, we had « French order ». We were told to keep inside our rooms, but that did not prevent us from standing at the open doors to greet the « little fathers ». « Good-day, Russky » we shouted, regardless of the Germans. « Germania kaput » (done for). The Russians could not make much headway. Every door was a stumbling-block and every Frenchman an obstacle. Cigars and cakes were showered on the Russians, to say nothing of hand-clasps and friendly pats on the back. The Germans laughed, but on the wrong side of their mouths. They had expected fighting and they saw love. The fuss that went on until nine o'clock was indescribable. Every roomful of Frenchmen gave some kind of feast. The poorer prisoners gave white crusts that had been baked in Saintonge or Lower Brittany ; the richer cooked chocolate and gave it to their guests with biscuits. Our allies folded their mattresses in two and sat on them, digesting the food that had been sent by French mothers. They were quite carried away by this abundance of food and fraternity. Mute and full of wonder, ignorant of our language as we were ignorant of theirs, and knowing no other way of showing their gratitude, they embraced us frequently ».

Such small facts as these are more effective than any amount of reasoning to support the often-observed affinity of the Russian and the French soldier. They both have spirit. The Russian soldier certainly does his work on the battlefield without flinching. He proved this once again during the two hard years of warfare in East Prussia, Poland and Galicia. The Carpathian campaign brought much glory to the Russian arms and was full of wonderful incidents. Some of the more heroic episodes, such as the capture of Kemmern last November, deserve special mention. Under the snow that the Russian soldier knows so well, forcing their way through swamps full of water towards a line of low hills defended

by machine-guns, the troops fought six days without a break, and, on the sixth day, they attacked with water up to their waists. On the Russian front, just as on ours, the Germans have fought a great many night engagements. Petroff, writing in the « Russkoie Slovo » has given us some good descriptions of these nocturnal battles—the preliminary bombardment, the gradual approach of the enemy in the darkness, and then an outburst of light all along the fighting line. In the rear were little splashes of light from the torches on the motor ambulances and ammunition wagons coming up behind the attack. The cyclists jumped off their machines quite close to the Russian trenches and, as Petroff expersses it, spread out along the lines like water flowing out of the neck of a bottle. He also describes how more and more engines of warfare and machine-guns were brought up. The Russian soldier has had to suffer severely from German machinery and technical skill, but his courage has never failed under the most trying circumstances. Some day we may have an adequate historical record of the spirit of sacrifice shown by the Russian soldier when he had to give way for a time against the movable factories of the German army during the tragic summer of 1915.

In courage, the officer is the equal of the soldier, and this gives me an opportunity to express the admiration of all France for the great general who has shown undoubted military genius in the face of terrible difficulties ; I refer to the Grand Duke Nicholas. Without passing judgment on the whole of his work, it can already be said that the campaign in Armenia now going on, will stand as a model of its kind. It shows a remarkable spirit of decision and an invariably close connection between conception and execution. What was the position in Armenia in September 1915 ? Massacres were going on continually in the vilayets of Sivas, Erzerum and Trebizond. Those who made up their minds to escape had to cross the Mesopotamian desert. The Turkish policy of extermination

had been carried out with special cruelty in the neighbourhood of Lake Van, a high-lying region with orchards, gardens and waterfalls. The frightened Armenians made their escape in thousands towards the Russian frontier. Even when they met the Czar's soldiers they remained in a state of panic. They continued their flight, putting their sick and stragglers on their carts and stopping only to bury their dead. The ferocious Kurd fancied himself the master of the country. Terrified Armenia had lost all hope.

Then the Grand Duke Nicholas appeared on the scene. His campaign in Armenia and Persia was prepared and carried out with magnificent energy. Nothing could have been more complicated than the state of affairs in Persia. A Swedish adventurer, Major Demar, was holding the government in check and was preparing to effect a junction between Persian detachments and the Turkish forces. They were to have combined at Hamadan, but the Russians took that city, and then Erzerum and Bitlis, and they will soon be co-operating with the English against Bagdad. To-day Trebizond is Russian. The Turks have had to abandon this very ancient town, pervaded by its curious odor of fruit, tobacco and spices. The white flag with the blue St. Andrew's cross now floats over the harbor once filled by ships from Rome. After five centuries of possession, the Turkish caliphate, beaten on sea and land, has had to give up Trebizond. The Russian advance still continues along the rest of the Armenian front. The Russian army has had its reverses, but we have seen it conquer East Prussia and Galicia and occupy Armenia. Are we not entitled (1) to look forward with great hope to the time when this force, which is being constantly added to and provided with equipment, will be let loose against the boastful

(1) No change has been made in the text of this address, which was delivered prior to the great Russian offensive in Volhynia and Galicia.

enemy who was the cause of all the trouble ? May we ourselves have the strength to wait and suffer patiently until the coming of that day, which will make up for so many trials and disappointments—that happy day for which we all long so ardently ! For, in a drama of such tremendous amplitude and importance, the nations themselves must put forth great efforts to support their heroic armies. Russia, like France, has realized this necessity, as I will be able to show you by a few examples.

The connecting link between the army in the field and the nation at work is to be found first of all in the august person of the Czar. We have all heard how he lived and worked last winter in one of the towns of White Russia. He lived in two rooms on the first floor of a small house, one of these rooms being his office and the other his bedroom. There was a small garden around the house. Every morning—at any rate in November 1915—a little after nine o'clock, the Emperor, wearing his Russian blouse with a leather belt around his waist, and top-boots, went to the headquarters Staff. He went through all the reports received from the front during the night, and worked all the morning with his generals. About noon he went back to his little house, and, after a very simple luncheon, he resumed his labours. The general to whom I am indebted for these few notes called him the « imperial workman ». We can try to imagine the thoughts and anxieties which, throughout these two long years, have passed through the mind of the monarch responsible for so vast an empire. He has had no lack of difficulties, disappointments and unpleasant surprises, but history will do the Czar this justice, that, notwithstanding all complications, vicissitudes and the enemy's perfidious designs, he has defended the national sentiment, in its purest and most independent form, with the full strength of his honor and conscience. He has invariably embodied the soul of Russia and has protected it, both abroad and at

home, with a vigor and loyalty calling for our admiration and respect.

This noble example has been followed. I do not mean to say that there are no different opinions or different interests in Russia. We Frenchmen, who insist so much on freedom of thought and individual and political liberty, can hardly be surprised to hear that Russia, now in full process of development, is a country with all kinds of views, divergent views and even opposite tendencies. Whatever our enemies may say, there is great deal more independence of thought in Russia than in Germany; but, as I propose to show, these varied and conflicting opinions agree in regard to the national duty and the national determination to conquer. People of all shades of opinion have adopted the formula, which is constantly heard : « Nothing counts but the war. »

This was the view that inspired the special assembly of the Muscovite nobility, held last October. « The whole people » said their resolution « must be united in labor for one common purpose : complete victory over the enemy ».

This was also the view that inspired the congress of Russian cities. As one speaker said on this occasion : « Russia has never yet met the adversary who could shatter her resistance. Our ancestors had to endure many misfortunes, and our country has known its trials, but every war has made it stronger and caused it to advance along the path of progress. We have before us a free country in painful travail. All our will-power is directed to one end—victory over the enemy. To achieve this, our forces must be united and organized. Not until then will Russia be indestructible. It is absolutely necessary that our congress should pass a unanimous resolution in this sense. The form of the resolution is a matter of secondary importance; what matters is that we should be united, and that no enemy, either avowed or concealed, should again succeed in overcoming and dispersing the forces of Great Russia ». This

vigorous language came, I believe, from Congressman Chingareff, who is with us to-day.

This has been the burden of many utterances by Congressman Miliukoff, who is not only a historian but a professor and journalist and is extremely well informed as to what goes on in the world of facts as well as the world of ideas, and has given our country many proofs of his affection.

This was the burden of the resolution voted in October 1915, soon after Russia had experienced severe reverses, by the Zemstvos' congress. I will quote the following passage from this resolution : « In this threatening hour of trial for our people, we, the delegates of the provincial Zemstvos, retain steadfast and immovable faith in the courage of our gallant army, and we reckon with confidence on final victory, before which there neither can nor ought to be any question of peace. Fully conscious of our great responsibility towards the country, which must bring all its children together, we will continue and extend our labors with the same ardor as before, for the benefit of the army. » The motion voted by the congress of Russian cities was of the same kind and in the same tone.

Germany, Austria and Turkey have been trying to use some of the Russian revolutionists against their country. Gregory Alexinsky has described these underhand dealings, which were alluded to in secret instructions from the German General Staff. They took place at Geneva, at Lemberg, and even at Constantinople, where many people from Ukrania and Georgia lived before the war. It is hardly necessary to add that none of these infamous attempts met with any success.

Out of many documentary proofs of the unanimous determination of the Russian people to work for victory, I will ask you to let me quote one that particularly struck me. It comes from a people's party which appeals especially to the working and agricultural classes. It was published in the Russian Press early in October, 1915, and contains the following passage : « We who sign this appeal belong to various schools of thought among the Russian people. We differ in opinion on many points, but we all agree in believing that the defeat of Russia in her struggle with Germany would also be a defeat in her struggle for liberty. We believe that our partisans, guided by this conviction, should unite in the service of the people during the period of mortal danger through which we are passing. We appeal to all intelligent workmen, peasants, artizans, clerks, and, in fact, to all who earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, whose means of existence are insufficient and who seek for a better state of things for themselves, their children and their fathers. We greet them warmly and ask them to heed us at this fateful moment when the enemy, after seizing the fortresses in Eastern Russia, has occupied a large part of her territory and is threatening Kieff, Petrograd and Moscow, that is to say, the most important centers of Russian life. »

Is not this appeal very moving in its directness and simplicity ? The whole of it bears the same impress. It does not confine itself to persuasion but goes on to discuss various points. It refers to what we endured in France after the war of 1870 : « When the Prussians besieged Paris and the prices of necessaries went up, the poor of course suffered much more than the rich. It was the same when Germany extorted a war indemnity of five milliards of francs from vanquished France. Who really paid the money ? The poor, because to pay the indemnity, indirect taxation had to be considerably increased, and the weight of this taxation, as is known, falls almost entirely on the lower classes. But all this amounted to comparatively little. What bore hardest of all on France was the check on her economic development. In other words, France's defeat had the most deplorable consequences to the interests of her people and still more to the whole of her future development. »

There could be no better way than this of talking to the Rus-

sian workmen and peasants. The appeal goes on to a series of logical conclusions full of unanswerable arguments. You can find nothing more vigorous, even in the appeals made to the people in the heroic periods of our history in France. Russia's warlike ardor is sustained not only by the power of her instinct, but by a well-reasoned conviction which it is only just to recognize.

One result is that the Russian people have given vigorous assistance to their Government. Up to January 1916, the Zemstvos' Union had created over 200 hospitals, many sanatoria for cosumptive patients, and many ambulance sections. The Union has also provided for Russians who were driven from their homes, and has helped to make munitions. The various forms of social effort continue to show the greatest energy. A congress of war-industries has just been held at Petrograd. A recent speech by Prince Lvov has aroused legitimate enthusiasm throughout Russia. The Zemstvos have just voted another resolution containing the declaration (which expresses the general sentiment) that the war must be carried on to the end. The Russian people, like their army, are thus working heart and soul in the cause of freedom. Those who watch the progress of Russia from year to year, who love the country and believe in its magnificent future, cannot but recognize the prodigious extent to which this terrible crisis has enriched the resources of a country that is little known and often misrepresented.

I would like to be able to show you that this remarkable effort, which of course has not always worked smoothly, has not affected the inner and essential forces of the Empire. The effort can only be described as immense. A well known French historian, M. Ernest Denis, wrote recently : « I do not believe that History affords a more magnificent spectacle, and nothing is better calculated to fill us with admiration and sympathy for the Russian people than the efforts they have

put forth since August 1914. Nothing, too, could give us more confidence in a complete and durable victory than the splendid spectacle of this giant giving a wrench with his powerful loins and bursting the bonds that his adversaries had wound round him. We now see the Russian people gradually collecting all their strength, overcoming all weaknesses, inspiring their leaders with their own indomitable resolution, and now stancing before the world in their imperial majesty and the plenitude of their inexhaustible strength. »

The situation could not be better expressed ; but, while devoting the greater part of her resources to her army, Russia is also thinking about her future. The war has caused her various difficulties of an economic kind, and she has seen a rise in the price of meat, sugar, etc., but, on the whole, her position remains more than satisfactory. In his book on « Russia and the War » Gregory Alexinsky tells us how the village councils have helped the peasant families whose men were at the war. In many places, the « mir », or community, finished the farm work, did the autumn sowings, split the logs and garnered the wheat. In the Ufa government, the inhabitants of forty-three Russian and Bashkir villages formed a brotherhood to help soldiers' families. In one district of the Poltava government, the peasants who had not been called up for army service came together and finished up all that had to be done on the fields of the men who had gone. At Alexandrovka, the « skhod » decided that all the inhabitants should leave their own work and attend first of all to that of the reservists. The Kuban district co-operative union formed special groups of « guardians » for families deprived of their able-bodied members. There are innumerable other instances of this fine spirit of brotherhood.

We have observed with interest the labors of the Russian Export Committee, which is trying to find direct outlets on European markets for Russian goods without having recourse to

intermediaries, and wants to see manufactured articles exported instead of raw materials. This committee is also agitating for the development of communications by rail and river, and is pointing out the need for free ports on the Black Sea and in Siberia. The Minister of Agriculture has just asked for a large vote to improve cultivation methods, and, I believe, a very important debate has taken place in the Duma on this serious question. There is not the slightest doubt that Russia would like to free herself from the hold obtained by the Germans on her industries and trade. As an instance, I may mention that a dozen or so of seed-farms have been started as a result of the discovery that Germans had practically a monopoly of the Russian seed trade. It was even announced quite recently that a Superior Council had been created to deal with the whole economic position of Russia. Signs of progress are visible on all hands.

I note with pleasure that the chairman of this council, M. Pokrovsky, Controller-General of the Empire, has expressed his desire to act in complete accord with the Allies. I observe with satisfaction that Russian public opinion is becoming more and more interested in that economic co-operation among the allies which must survive the military co-operation. As M. Timiriazieff says : « The German mailed fist will be shattered on the battlefield, but, after the war, continuous effort on the part of Russia and her allies will be required to overcome Germany's economic preponderance. » In support of the same idea, M. Ivan Ozeroff, who is a member of the Russian Upper Chamber and a professor both at the University and the Institute of Comercial Science at Moscow, has published a work which I recommend to your notice, on « The Economic and Financial Problems of Modern Russia. »

These are questions, ladies and gentlemen, of the highest importance, and I will ask your permission to dwell upon them for a few moments at any rate. It is indispensable for France

and Russia to set to work now on the preparation for developing their business relations after the war. Russia has developped enormously during the past twenty years. She has benefited as M. Louis Pradel says, by three great reforms which will make her economic history illustrious : the abolition of serfdom, the agrarian reform in 1906 and the abolition of spirit-drinking. I will spare you the figures, though they are remarkable enough, but I must give you, and ask you to remember, just a few which are nothing less than dramatic. Russia's total imports in 1903 were 681 million roubles. In 1909 they rose to 906 millions, and, in 1913, they reached 1,374 millions. Out of this total of 1.374 million roubles, the imports from Germany represented 652 millions and those from France 57 millions. In other words, Germany supplied 50 per cent of Russia's needs and France only 4 per cent.

This contrast helps to explain a great many facts and influences, and also dramas to which I do not propose to refer. This state of things must be ended at any cost, if we desire the political alliance to be followed by the economic alliance which alone can make it durable and fruitful. These are not mere statistics; they are dominant truths. Young Frenchmen, you must go to Russia, and to be of any use as a traveler, you must learn the Russian language. I wish that the importance of this were understood in our country. As for you, my Russian friends, I know you have observed, like ourselves, that there are difficulties in the way of the entente in economic matters. I know that Russia is properly jealous of all forms of her sovereignty ; but, as M. Viviani said with great intelligence, what we want is « an understanding which will be flexible enough to leave each country the autonomy resulting from its sovereignty and strong enough to prevent them from again becoming the tributaries of the central empires ». The best of our thinkers should be called upon to help in paving the way to this understanding, and I am sure our guests to-day

will be willing to join with us and work towards the definition of the statute which will give new strength and deep-rooted guarantees to our alliance.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must apologize for making a speech which may have struck you as too long and too dry ; but could there be a more tremendous subject than this ? In these days, speech is not tolerable unless it has an active influence. I have endeavoured to sketch the outlines of a remarkable period of history which will be analyzed and commented upon admiringly in the future. It has already been related, especially in Gregory Alexinsky's remarkable book ; but it was just as well that a Frenchman should attempt this short summary so as to show our friends and allies that we are trying to follow, help and understand them.

Let us therefore, to conclude, concentrate our thoughts on that great and powerful Russia who is fighting and suffering, like ourselves, for a victory without which the future not only of our countries but of all Europe would be endangered. She rises superior to all difficulties and dangers and, to all those who have eyes to see, she represents a great moral force. Every crisis in her existence has been followed by growth and progress, as M. Miliukoff has frequently shown us, notably in his book « The Russian Crisis ». Hitherto she has exhausted neither the resources of her immense territories nor the resources of a mentality perhaps as yet less definite than ours but flexible and able to feel and comprehend everything, and full of humanity, as Dostoievsky expressed it. I remember reading in Gogol's « Tarass Boulba » a chapter that made a great impression on me. It is a magnificent description of the steppes. Nature appears in the aspect of an ocean of green and gold, dotted with millions of flowers. The white of the clover and the blue of the cornflower peep up from the grass. Partridges are running about here and there, with outstretched necks. The air is filled with the voices of thousands of birds, while

high above hang motionless clouds of vultures gazing steadfastly down in search of prey. Far away, wild geese glide over the surface of a lake. Suddenly a gull starts up from the grassy depths and rises with powerful, regular strokes of its wings. It flies up and up, revelling in the limpid air waves until at length, satisfied, it returns to the ground.

This is how the Russian mind, with its alternations of realism and immaterial impulse, appears to me ; but, however far removed or however high it may have risen, it always comes back to earth—to Russian earth. This love of country, which makes for the profound unity of Russia, has never shown itself better, and has never inspired more heroism or calm resolution, than during these bloodstained years of warfare. This is what I have been endeavoring to show you. At either extremity of Europe, France and Russia, each in her own way, represent all that is ardently generous in humanity. Germany, who loves hate, cultivates it and enjoys it, has tried in vain to separate them. The present war will consecrate and fortify the union of our two nations and our two races. We are now blood brothers, and, as a Frenchman, with all my heart I utter this cry, hoping that it will resound beyond the battlefields and reach the heart of the allied nation, of « Vive la Russie ! »

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